

## Message Text

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64

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, ECON, UR, NATO

SUBJECT: NATO SYMPOSIUM: "LIFE IN THE SOVIET UNION TODAY"

SUGGESTED AS TOPIC

REF: STATE 67162 (NOTAL)

1. A NATO SPONSORED SYMPOSIUM RELATING TO SOME ASPECT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOVIET UNION OR EASTERN EUROPE HAS BECOME ACCEPTED AS ANNUAL EVENT. PREVIOUS SYMPOSIA WERE HELD ON SOVIET ECONOMIC GROWTH 1970-1980 (1971); MANKING, MONEY AND CREDIT IN EASTERN EUROPE (1973); AND THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF SIBERIA (1974).

2. NATOS ECONOMIC DIRECTOR HAS SUGGESTED THAT MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE GIVE ADVANCE THINKING TO WHAT MIGHT BE AN APPROPRIATE TOPIC FOR A SYMPOSIUM TO BE HELD IN 1975, PROBABLY DURING JANUARY OR FEBRUARY. THE ECONOMIC DIRECTOR HAS SUGGESTED THE THEME "LIFE IN THE SOVIET UNION TODAY" AS OF INTEREST. LISTED BELOW (PARA 4) ARE VARIOUS PROBLEMS THAT COULD BE REVIEWED IN THIS CONTEXT.

3. ACTION REQUESTED. A) WASHINGTON AND EMBASSY MOSCOW VIEWS ON THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE SUBJECT AND THE PROBLEMS  
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MENTIONED AS KEY FACTORS TO FORM THE BASIS OF DISCUSSION. B) SUGGESTIONS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE SUBJECTS FOR THE SYMPOSIUM.

NATO SYMPOSIUM-1975  
LIFE IN THE SOVIET UNION TODAY

THE FOLLOWING KEY SECTORS COULD FORM THE BASIS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT SYMPOSIUM TO BE HELD EARLY IN 1975 ON "LIFE IN THE SOVIET UNION TODAY".

- A. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE SOVIET CITIZEN: AN ATTEMPT TO ANALYSE THE MENTALITY AND CRITERIA OF THE AVERAGE SOVIET CITIZEN IN TERMS OF HIS SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT.
- B. THE SOVIET CONSUMER
  - 1. WAGES: DIFFERENTIALS; LINKS TO PRODUCTIVITY; BONUSES, WORKER SENTIMENT TOWARD WAGE LEVELS. CATEGORY "A" AND "B" WAGE LEVELS.
  - 2. LIVING STANDARDS: THE FAMILY BUDGET AND USE OF TOTAL INCOME- FOOD, CLOTHING, FURNITURE, TAXATION, CULTURAL, ETC. WORKER BENEFITS-FUNDS FOR HOUSE BUILDING, VACATION RESORTS, ROLE OF AUTOMOBILE....
  - 3. CONSUMER GOODS: AVAILABILITY; COST; LUXURY GOODS IN SPECIAL STORES; CONSUMER SELECTIVITY; INFLATIONARY TRENDS SINCE 1961 (OLD RUBLE CONVERSION TO NEW); IMPACT ON CONSUMER OF WORLD ECONOMIC TRENDS, ESPECIALLY IN ENERGY SECTOR. STATUS OF KOLKHOZNIK VERSUS URBAN SOVIET.
  - 4. HOUSING: AVAILABILITY; STANDARDS; RENT STRUCTURE; PROPERTY OWNERSHIP.
  - 5. SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE: CATEGORIES COVERED; WEAKNESSES; COST OF SYSTEM AND SHARE IN OVERALL SOVIET EXPENDITURE; ROLE OF PRIVATE MEDICARE.
  - 6. WOMAN IN SOVIET SOCIETY: ROLE IN LABOUR FORCE AND AS A PRODUCTIVITY FACTOR; FAMILY PLANNING POLICIES AND ABORTION; LIKELY ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SOVIET GOVERNMENTS CALL FOR FARGER FAMILIES.
  - 7. THE CENTRE AND THE REPUBLICS: COMPARISON OF CONSUMER STANDARDS IN MOSCOW/SENINGRAD AND THE SOVIET PROVINCES. COMPARSON OF THE RUSSIAN/NON-RUSSIAN REGIONS.
- C. ECONOMIC STRATIFICATION OF SOVIET SOCIETY
  - 1. CLASS STRUCTURE.
  - 2. THE SOVIET EXECUTIVE: SALARY STRUCTURE AND FRINGE BENEFITS.

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- D. THE SOVIET PENSIONER
  - 1. AS AN ECONOMIC FACTOR WITH THE SOVIET LABOUR FORCE; ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES; PENSION BENEFITS AND ECONOMIC COST TO THE STATE; LAGGING PRODUCTIVITY AND A DECLINING BIRTH RATE AS MOTIVATION FOR INCREASING UTILISATION OF PENSIONERS. RUMSFELD

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